

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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^{N_U} News Release^{N_U}



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ARTHUR R. MARSHALL LOXAHATCHEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Hosts 5th Annual Event

The 5th Annual Everglades Day Celebration at the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge is scheduled for Saturday, February 14, 2004. The day long celebration has been selected by Florida's senior Senator Bob Graham as the site for his 396th workday. Graham will join 100 other volunteers and Refuge staff as they greet several thousand visitors to this event.

Graham will begin his day by meeting and greeting visitors as they board the shuttle bus that will take them to the day's activities. Later in the morning he will work with Refuge staff to put the finishing touches on the Everglades Trail Kiosk which will be dedicated soon after the last nail is driven. He will then join representatives of several Eagle Scout Merit Badge projects at the dedication of the recently completed overlook at the Art Marshall Cypress Trail. The other projects are benches at the chickee near the Marsh Trail and the photoblind at Impoundment C-8. The overlook was completed by Michael Cairnes, as an Eagle Merit Badge Project sponsored by the Marshall Foundation in partnership with Banrock Station and Wetlands Center; the benches were built by Richard Byrnes Jr. as an Eagle Merit Badge Project sponsored by members of the Audubon Society of the Everglades as well as the organization itself, and the photoblind was an Eagle Merit Badge Project built by Chris Chamberlain with contributions from Home Depot and other businesses in the community. The Refuge provided oversight to all these projects to make sure Refuge guidelines were followed. We are also advised that Senator Graham plans to give a presentation on his "Memories of the Everglades."

This year's theme for the day is "Love Your Everglades," high-lighting the many aspects of outdoor recreational activities available at the Refuge. "We are pleased that Senator Graham will be involved in Everglades Day at this historic part of everglades system," said Mark Musaus, Manager of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. During his tenure as governor, the Senator, along with Art Marshall, Marjory Stoneman Douglas and Johnny Jones worked diligently to pass the legislation known as the "Save Our Everglades Act."

In addition to complimentary admission, visitors will receive free, off-site parking with shuttle bus service to the hub of activities. Day-long trolley service will be available to transport visitors to every venue offered during the festival. Activities begin at 8 a.m. with bird walks, butterfly and nature walks and a swamp stroll. Canoe excursions, fishing and paddling demonstrations, biking and hiking the Everglades, photography workshops and a beginner's photography walk will be offered. There is something for everyone to enjoy. Spanish interpreters will offer information and there will be an Everglades

presentation in Spanish.

Children's activities include environmental games and storytelling by the renowned storyteller, javier del sol(his name is spelled in lower case), folk music by the group, Roadside Revue, and Cindy Hackney. A wide variety of food will be prepared by Melvin Cook, a professional barbecue chef.

"Our purpose for initiating Everglades Day five years ago was to call attention to this valuable natural resource here in our own backyard," said Carol Shields, president of Audubon Society of the Everglades. "It is astounding that so many residents are not aware of the Refuge. We wanted to educate the public and are accomplishing that goal as the attendance increases each year," she said.

In addition to the Audubon Society of the Everglades, Everglades Day is sponsored by the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Friends of the Loxahatchee Refuge and the Arthur R. Marshall Foundation.

The Refuge is located on Lee Road, approximately 2 miles south of Boynton Beach Boulevard, off State Road 441. Signs will direct visitors to off-site parking Located at Monte's Packaging Company, one mile south of Lee Road on the west side of the highway. For additional information go to the Refuge website: <http://loxahatchee.fws.gov>.